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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DJIBOUTI 000667

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [ASEC](#) [DJ](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#)

SUBJECT: 2004 EACTI CONFERENCE - REACTION OF DJIBOUTI DELEGATES

REF: DJIBOUTI 660

Classified By: Ambassador Marguerita Ragsdale. Reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

1. (C) Summary: Members of Djibouti's delegation to the April 22-23 East Africa Counter-Terrorist Initiative (EACTI) Conference in Kampala relayed their observations of the event to Embassy officers. The delegates found the conference a useful forum to express Djibouti's total commitment to the Global War on Terrorism and said they have a clearer idea of the threat of transnational terrorism than most neighboring countries, especially Ethiopia. They expressed continued frustration at the delay in delivery of EACTI assistance, particularly speedboats for coastal defense. They conceded that Djibouti had done a poor job of prioritizing training needs. They indicated their belief that for success in counter-terrorism in the Horn of Africa, the U.S. should commit itself more forcefully in efforts to reintegrate Somalia into the East African community of nations. End summary.

2. (SBU) From April 22 through April 23, 2004, delegates from eight East African countries and numerous branches of the U.S. government, met in Kampala, Uganda, to discuss EACTI issues. Djibouti was represented by Abdillahi Mohamed Abdillahi, Deputy Chief of National Security Services; Lieutenant Colonel Osman Nour Soubagleh, Djibouti's liaison to the U.S. military; Mohamed Ali Hassan, Director of Bilateral Relations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Mohamed Moussa Abar, Captain (Harbormaster) of the port of Djibouti; and Bryan Boyd, Force Protection Officer, American Embassy Djibouti.

3. (C) Following the conference, the Djiboutian delegates met with Embassy officers to provide their reaction to the conference. The delegates stated that the conference was a good initiative and very productive in bringing the East African countries together to discuss counter-terrorist issues with representatives from the U.S. government, particularly those from the U.S. State Department who are responsible for EACTI funding. They said they sincerely want the U.S. government to recognize that Djibouti is committed to fighting the Global War on Terrorism. They also commented that their involvement in the conference, including participation in the discussions and presentations in two of the four breakout groups' final reports to the plenary, are good examples of Djibouti's level of dedication. Abdillahi represented the group on "Law and Law Enforcement" while Hassan represented the group on "Integration and Regional Cooperation."

4. (C) The delegates shared with FPO officer their belief in the need to accelerate the initiative in Djibouti. They cited lack of delivery to date of engineering construction equipment and five patrol boats that are part of EACTI funding and requested an update on delivery status. The delegates however, were very pleased with progress of the TIP/PISCES program in Djibouti. They said the Global War on Terrorism is unlike any other war in history and the need to move swiftly to fortify Djibouti is critical to its success. They also stated that there is a need for the U.S. government to institute new procedures to combat terrorism more swiftly and that many of the procedures used by the U.S. government today were originally initiated during the cold war.

5. (C) The delegates also admitted shortcomings in their own government, particularly in providing clear guidance and a timely response to requests by U.S. representatives on ways EACTI funding should be utilized in Djibouti. The delegates stated that it is their goal to ensure that a list of well-conceived requests is prepared and an open dialogue is maintained to assist the U.S. government on properly allocating EACTI funding.

6. (C) One delegate commented that he appreciated the frankness of American participants at the conference and believed that many of the comments made were crucial and important to the conference, particularly to his understanding of foreign policy issues and how EACTI works in other countries. This delegate was particularly

impressed by comments made from the U.S. representatives from Ethiopia and Eritrea.

17. (C) The delegates concluded their overall summary of the conference by commenting on Somalia. They said there is a great need for all participants, and especially the U.S., to devise a strategy to stabilize Somalia. They went on to say that it was extremely important that the U.S. spearhead peace efforts in Somalia, and that the U.S. should not run from the issue. The delegates said Somalia is the largest safe haven for terrorists in East Africa and failure to deal with Somalia ultimately weakens the long-term anti-terrorist efforts of the U.S. and East African countries.

18. (C) One delegate also commented that Somalia's seacoast covers over 3,000 km and reaches from Djibouti all the way to Kenya providing the greatest external border threat to other countries. Something needs to be done, they said, to address this vulnerability. They also wanted to emphasize that the issues of controlling the internal borders in various East African countries are more political than security-oriented. Greater efforts should be placed on controlling the airport, seaport, and seacoast. (Note: Comments about internal border security stemmed from a series of discussions at the conference that stressed the need for a national I.D. card to track movement of people. End Note.) He continued that borders between countries are not the overlying problem and many of the people in East Africa routinely cross from one country to the next daily. The delegates indicated that proper control of the movement of people between internal borders can be achieved by building structures such as wells and schools that will attract migrant and nomadic people to settle in a particular area.

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